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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 001049

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SUBJECT: NCP INVITES U.S. POLITICAL PARTIES TO CONVENTION,
ASKS HELP TO DEVELOP THE EAST

Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) This is an action message; see paragraph 8.

¶2. (C) Summary: During a September 7 meeting with Charge, Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismael asked Charge's help in identifying U.S. Congressmen or other representatives of the two major U.S. parties to be invited to the National Congress Party (NCP) annual convention October 1-3. In advance of an international conference on development of Sudan's East, Ismael asked Charge to confirm his understanding that the East, like the South, is exempt from U.S. economic sanctions. Ismael also said he advised Dr. Ghazi Sala al-Deen al-Attabani would head the delegation to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and was open to the possibility of appropriate bilateral meetings in New York as well as Washington. End Summary.

¶3. (C) Charge met September 7 with Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismael. Ismael told Charge that he had spoken with President Bashir a day earlier, and asked to be relieved as head of Sudan's delegation to UNGA. Dr. Ghazi Sala Al-Deen Al-Attabani will be designated to take his place, he said. In addition, he said, he had urged Dr. Ghazi to go not only to New York but also to Washington, and to arrange meetings with appropriate officials. Ismael anticipated that Ghazi, who will leave Khartoum on September 14 for Doha, will arrive in New York on or about September 23,

¶4. (C) Sudan has begun preparations for an international conference for Eastern Sudan, he said. Since the signing of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in Asmara in 2006, there has been little development in the region. He envisions the construction of roads, the creation of villages for the displaced, and treatment centers for tuberculosis and other diseases, he said. Germany and some Gulf States are willing to support the conference, he said, although Norway has declined. The conference will be held in Egypt, Turkey or one of the Gulf countries, Ismael told Charge. Ismael said he understands that the East, like the South, is not included under the U.S. economic sanctions regime. At Ismael's request, Charge promised to provide him with a definitive answer to his question. .

¶5. (C) The National Congress Party (NCP) will hold its annual conference from October 1-3, Ismael said. Party leadership would like to have representatives of the two major U.S. parties for at least the opening of the convention, and asked Charge who might be receptive to the invitation. Charge noted that both the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI) are currently providing technical assistance in Sudan in preparation for the 2010 elections, adding that an invitation from the NCP to representatives of those organizations might be useful. Ismael said he would welcome suggestions of individuals to invite to attend the conference.

¶6. (C) Ismael said that he planned to depart the following day for Yemen, where he would discuss the situation in

Somalia. Sudan has been fully supportive of Somalia's president Sharif, he said, providing financing, training and weapons for his fighters. Ismael is not certain where the support for Al-Shabaab is coming from, and worried aloud that Al-Shabab could take power. Sudan could attempt to intensify financing and support to Sharif, but Sudan's resources are limited, he said. He planned to travel on September 8 to Yemen to discuss the situation, he told Charge.

17. (C) Ismael told the Charge that since the commencement of the U.S.-led trilaterals, the South had been reluctant to participate in bilateral talks. Trust needs to be built between the parties, he said, and urged the Charge to impress this on his southern interlocutors. The NCP is not opposed to the upcoming political parties conference to be held in Juba, Ismael said, but all opposition parties, including all factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) should be invited to attend. "Why have Mubarak (Note: Mubarak al-Fadil, Chairman of the Umma Reform and Renewal Party End Note) and not Lam (Note: Lam Akol, former Foreign Minister and Chairman of SPLA-Democratic Change) been invited to attend?", he asked rhetorically. In the view of the National Congress Party (NCP), all participants should have input into the agenda for the conference. If the meeting in Juba helps build trust, considers and votes on solutions to problems, provides a way for all political parties to become familiar with Juba, well and good, he said. However, what the NCP cannot allow is that the conference participants would vote, for example, to urge the United States to continue economic sanctions against Sudan. If the Charge offers the South any advice, Ismael said, he should urge the South to work to build trust.

18. (C) Comment and Action Request for S/USSES: Ismael, who has often been a thorn in the side of the embassy, was on a charm offensive, soliciting Charge's views and asking advice. Nonetheless, all three requests represent opportunities for the United States to press the NCP on a range of related issues. Post seeks clarification as to whether Sudan's East is included within the U.S. economic sanctions regime and S/USSES views on the desirability of securing appropriate bilateral appointments for Dr. Ghazi al-Deen al-Attabani in either New York or Washington.

WHITEHEAD